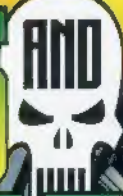


AMALGAM™



BULLETS AND BRACELETS



APPROVED BY THE
FEDERAL
COMMISSION
ON
COMMERCE
AUTHORITY



#1
APR 98

CASTLE
AND
DIANA
TOGETHER
AGAIN!



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\$1.95 US / \$2.85 CAN © 03504

HE IS THE PRINCESS DIANA, A ROGUE AMAZON FROM PARADISE ISLAND, WHO LEFT YEARS AGO TO INVESTIGATE MAN'S WORLD. HE IS TREVOR CASTLE, A FORMER SPECIAL FORCES OPERATIVE WHO, WHEN HE SAW HIS FAMILY KILLED, WAGED WAR AGAINST THE MAFIA AS THE PUNISHER. NOW -- BECAUSE YOU DEMANDED IT -- THEY ARE RE-UNITED IN A CLASH OF...

BULLETS AND BRACELETS

STAN SCHWARTZ
PRESENTS
DIANA PRINCE AND
THE PUNISHER
III

FINAL THRUST

THE EVENT? DIANA PRINCE AND TREVOR CASTLE ARE TOGETHER AGAIN AND KICKING BUTT! WHAT'S THE OCCASION? HANG TIGHT, EFFENDI! -- WE'LL BRING YOU UP TO DATE AS WE GO!

GET DOWN, PRINCESS! THESE HAND GOONS MEAN BUSINESS!

SO DO IT! AND, CASTLE? THE DAY I CAN'T HANDLE MOOKS LIKE THEM -- OR LIKE YOU -- IS THE DAY I TRADE THESE ADAMANTIUM BRACELETS FOR COOKING PANS!

BRAAAP

BRAAAP

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UNTIL, FINALLY, THOSE HAND MEMBERS SURVIVING RETREAT, LEAVING BEHIND ONLY THE DEAD...

GREAT! THE PLAN WAS TO LEAVE SOME OF THEM ALIVE FOR QUESTIONING, TREVOR! REMEMBER?

NAG, NAG, NAG.



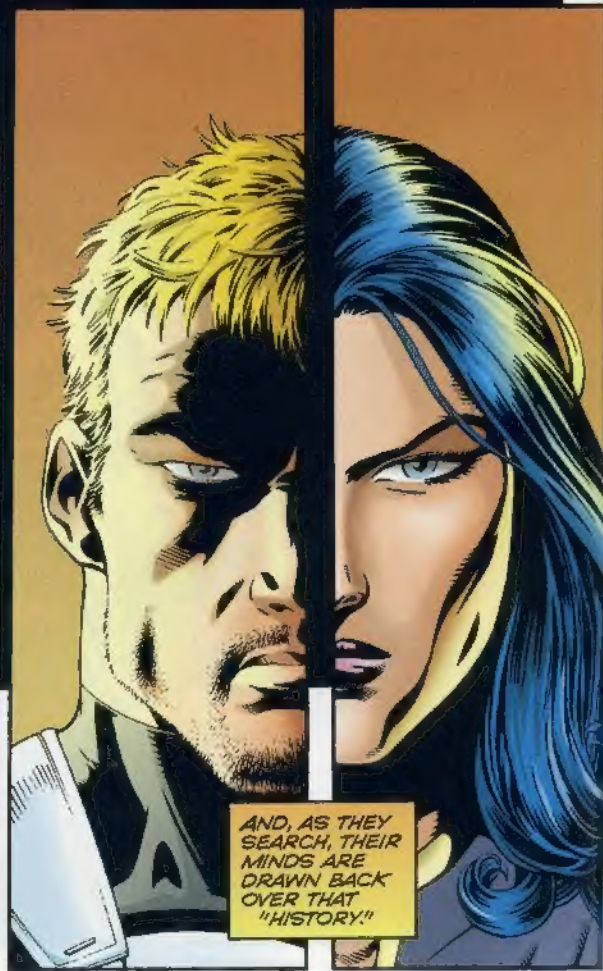
I THOUGHT YOU HAD TAKEN TO USING DUMMY BULLETS.

I DID. BUT THE DUMMIES KEPT GETTING UP.



LOOK, LET'S TABLE THE TALK. WE NEED TO FIND THE KID.

TALK'S NOT GOING TO DO US A BIT OF GOOD ANYWAY. THERE'S TOO MUCH HISTORY BETWEEN US... "PRINCESS".



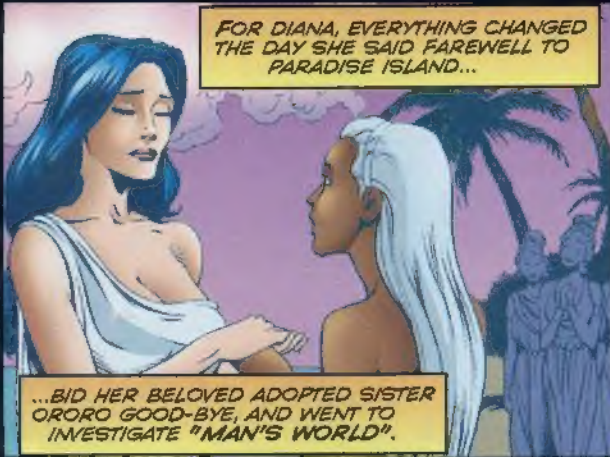
AND, AS THEY SEARCH, THEIR MINDS ARE DRAWN BACK OVER THAT "HISTORY."



FOR DIANA, SHE CAME OF AGE ON A MYSTIC ISLAND THAT COULD TRULY BE CALLED PARADISE.



WHILE CASTLE'S COMING OF AGE HAPPENED IN A JUNGLE HELL KNOWN AS VIETNAM.



FOR DIANA, EVERYTHING CHANGED THE DAY SHE SAID FAREWELL TO PARADISE ISLAND...

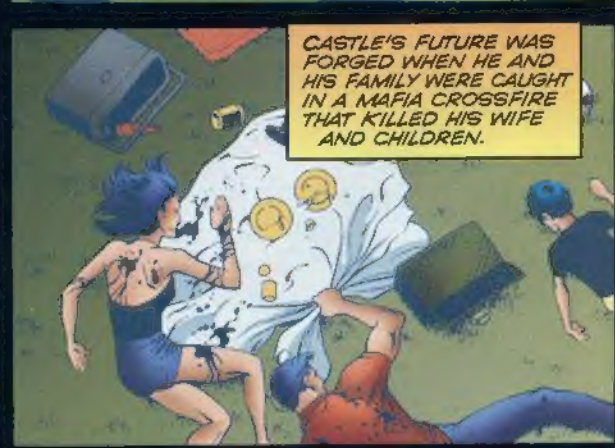
...BID HER BELOVED ADOPTED SISTER ORORO GOOD-BYE, AND WENT TO INVESTIGATE "MAN'S WORLD".



FOR CASTLE, THE WORLD ENDED DURING AN INNOCENT PICNIC IN THE PARK WITH HIS WIFE AND CHILDREN.



DIANA'S SERVICE TO THE WAKANDAN KING HELPED FORGE HER BRACELETS OF ADAMANTIUM.



CASTLE'S FUTURE WAS FORGED WHEN HE AND HIS FAMILY WERE CAUGHT IN A MAFIA CROSSFIRE THAT KILLED HIS WIFE AND CHILDREN.



DIANA HAS SINCE MADE HER MARK IN MAN'S WORLD AS DIANA PRINCE, FREELANCE.



WHILE CASTLE'S ONE-MAN VENDETTA AGAINST THE MOB MADE HIM INFAMOUS AS THE PUNISHER.

SHE WONDERS HOW THEY COULD EVER HAVE THOUGHT IT WOULD TURN OUT ANY OTHER WAY...



AND HE WONDERS HOW TWO SUCH DIS-SIMILIAR PEOPLE COULD'VE EVER BEEN BROUGHT TOGETHER. AND THE MEMORIES RUSH IN.

THE DAY SHE FOUND HIM...



...DYING OF HIS WOUNDS...

...AND SAVED HIM...

... BECAME HIS ANGEL.

IT NOW SEEMS INEVITABLE THAT THEY WOULD FALL IN LOVE...



...WOULD MARRY...



...WOULD HAVE A CHILD OF THEIR OWN...



...LITTLE RYAN CASTAGLIONE.



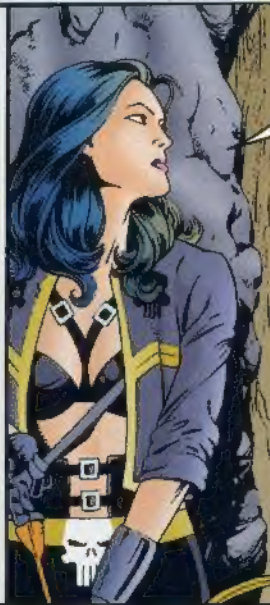
INEVITABLE, TOO, THAT THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THEM WOULD DRIVE THEM APART.

PERHAPS INEVITABLE AS WELL SOME UNSEEN ENEMY WOULD STRIKE AT THEM BY KIDNAPPING THE CHILD.



SHE WONDERS HOW THEY COULD EVER HAVE THOUGHT IT WOULD TURN OUT ANY OTHER WAY...





YOU KNOW IT'S A TRAP.

SOP WE GO IN, TRIGGER IT, WALK OUT THE OTHER SIDE. HOW ELSE DO WE FIND THE SPROUT?

YOU KNOW, IF RYAN HAD BEEN WITH ME, THIS WOULD NEVER'VE HAPPENED.



TAKEN HIM WITH YOU ON YOUR KILLING SPREES?

Oh, THAT WOULD'VE BEEN A FINE WAY TO RAISE OUR BOY.



BETTER'N NO CARE. YOU INSISTED ON SOLE CUSTODY, BUT THEN YOU WOULDN'T STAY HOME TO TAKE CARE OF HIM.



I'M NOT A WOMAN TO STAY HOME AND KEEP HOUSE ALL DAY. NEVER WAS; NEVER WILL BE.



WE TRIED THAT -- REMEMBER?

IT'S NOT WHY I WALKED ON PARADISE.



LOOKS LIKE A DEAD END.

JUST LIKE OUR RELATIONSHIP... "PRINCESS."



IF I HAD BEEN THERE WHEN THEY TOOK RYAN MAYBE I WOULD'VE BEEN KILLED AS WELL! OR IS THAT WHAT YOU WOULD PREFER, TREVOR?!

NO. I WISH I HAD BEEN THERE -- AND THAT I HAD DIED SAVING OUR SON.

THAT'S ALWAYS BEEN YOUR PROBLEM, TREVOR -- TOO READY TO DIE, NOT READY ENOUGH TO LIVE. I THOUGHT YOUR FIRST FAMILY WOULD'VE TAUGHT YOU -- YOU CAN'T BRING BACK THE DEAD!

A FITTING EPITAPH.

SLAM!



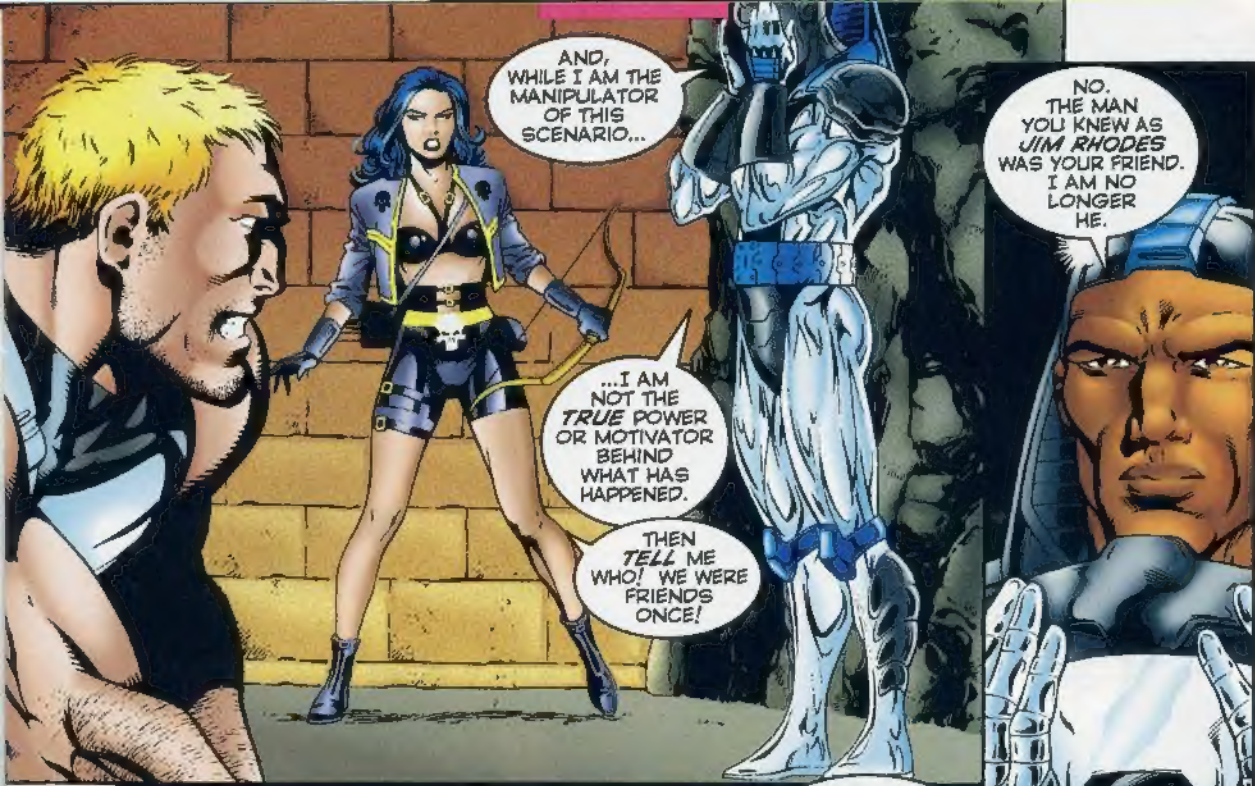
MONARCH!

SO THE RUMORS WERE RIGHT! YOU ARE THE ONE BEHIND ALL THIS!

GIMME BACK MY KID!

GYAAH!

YOU CANNOT TACKLE A HOLOGRAPHIC IMAGE, TREVOR CASTLE, AND IT WOULD BE FOOLISH FOR ME TO APPEAR IN PERSON, DON'T YOU THINK?



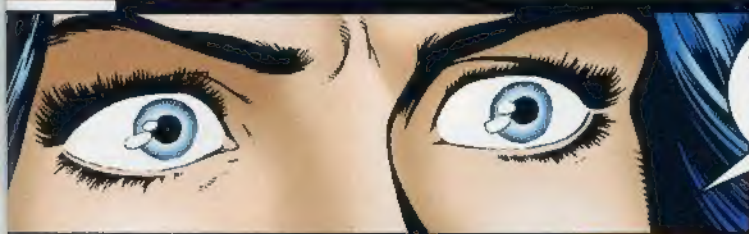
AND, WHILE I AM THE MANIPULATOR OF THIS SCENARIO...

NO. THE MAN YOU KNEW AS JIM RHODES WAS YOUR FRIEND. I AM NO LONGER HE.

...I AM NOT THE TRUE POWER OR MOTIVATOR BEHIND WHAT HAS HAPPENED.

THEN TELL ME WHO! WE WERE FRIENDS ONCE!

YOU ONCE WERE. AND, FOR A TIME, YOU AND I WERE... CLOSE. RHODEY, IF YOU EVER HAD ANY FEELINGS FOR ME AT ALL, TAKE ME TO MY CHILD!



OF COURSE -- NOT THAT THERE IS ANY CHOICE IN THE MATTER. BUT BE CAREFUL OF WHAT YOU SEEK, PRINCESS...

...IT COULD LEAD YOU TO YOUR GRAVE!

BOOM TUBE!



BOOM



GREAT GAEA! YOU KNOW WHERE WE'RE HEADED!



APOKOLIPS!

WE HAVEN'T BEEN HERE, PRINCESS, SINCE THE SECRET CRISIS. LOOKS LIKE WE'VE LANDED IN ARMAGHETTO.

Oh, Trevor... DOES THIS MEAN RYAN HAS BEEN BROUGHT HERE?!

THEY BOTH GROW SILENT. THE MEMORIES OF THIS PLACE ARE AS DARK AND HEAVY AS THE MASTER OF THIS PLANET, AN INTER-DIMENSIONAL JUMP FROM EARTH.

SO MANY GOOD PEOPLE GATHERED HERE TO FIGHT THE GREAT BATTLE AGAINST WHAT SEEMED TO BE CONSUMMATE EVIL. FRIENDS AS WELL AS FOES DIED HERE. THE HEROES WON -- BUT THE COST WILL EVER BE HEAVY ON THEIR HEARTS.



THEY'VE PROBABLY GOT RYAN IN THAT TERRIBLE ORPHANAGE, RUN BY THAT DESPICABLE OLD HARRIDAN, GRANNY HARKNESS. TREVOR, WE CAN'T LEAVE HIM THERE!

AGREED. BUT WE'RE GOING TO NEED MORE FIREPOWER -- AND I THINK I KNOW WHERE TO GET IT.



YOU TAKE CARE OF IT. I'LL GO AND SCOUT AHEAD -- SEE WHAT I CAN FIND OUT.

AFFIRMATIVE. BUT WAIT FOR ME OUTSIDE THE ORPHANAGE, PRINCESS -- THIS IS ONE BATTLE YOU DON'T WANT TO FIGHT ALONE!



GRANNY HARKNESS ORPHANAGE, WHERE THE RULING ELITE OF APOKOLIPS ARE POUNDED INTO SHAPE...

TREVOR, I KNOW I TOLD YOU TO WAIT BUT YOU'D BETTER HURRY.

I KNOW THE CALLOUS BRUTALITY TO CHILDREN THAT GOES ON IN THERE AND IT SICKENS ME TO THINK WHAT THEY MIGHT BE DOING TO MY... TO OUR BABY!



WELL, WELL, WELL -- SLUMMING AGAIN, PRINCESS?



BIG TITANIA!

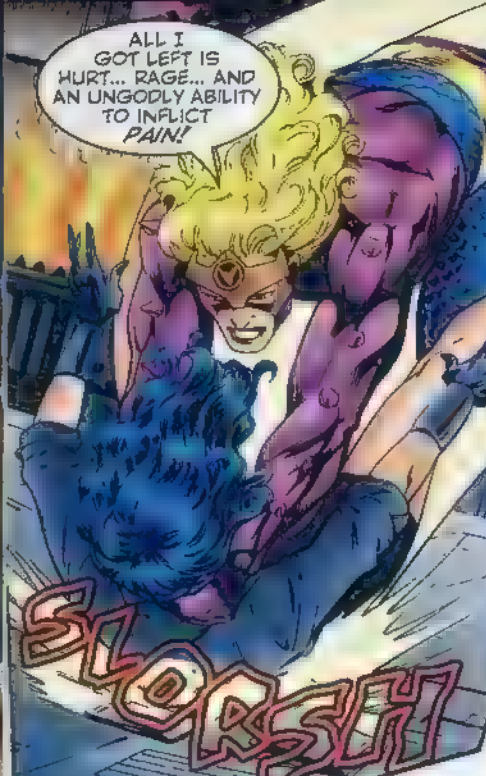
GONNA SURRENDER NOW, SWEETCHEEKS -- OR WE GONNA PLAY SOME? GRANNY KNEW YOU'D BE COMING, Y'SEE. THOUGHT I SHOULD BE THE ONE TO NAIL YA -- CONSIDERING HOW CLOSE WE ONCE WAS AND ALL --

I'M NOT LOOKING FOR A FIGHT, TITANIA. I JUST WANT MY BABY BACK. YOU AND I WERE FRIENDS ONCE --



DON'T EVEN BOTHER APPEALIN' TO MY SO-CALLED TENDER SIDE, PRINCESS.

ALL THAT DIED WHEN SCOTT FREE DIED DURING THE SECRET CRISIS. WE SAVED ALL EXISTENCE, BUT WE COULDN'T SAVE THE ONLY MAN I'LL EVER REALLY LOVE.




ALL I
GOT LEFT IS
HURT... RAGE... AND
AN UNGODLY ABILITY
TO INFLICT
PAIN!



I...
FEEL FOR
YOU...
TITANIA...!

SLASH!



BUT
I'M FIGHTING
FOR THE LIFE OF
MY CHILD, AND
NO ONE BETTER
GET IN MY
WAY!

SLASH!



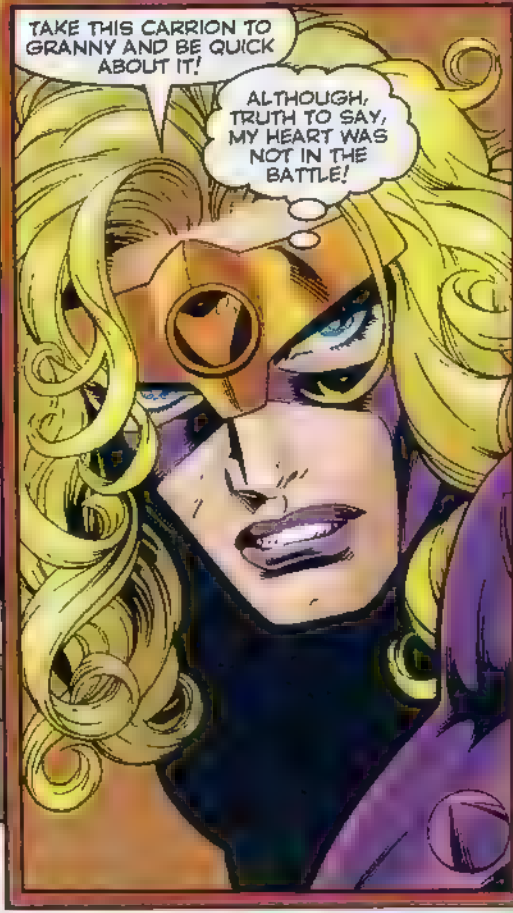
WHERE IS RYAN? DO YOU HAVE HIM TRAPPED IN THAT HELL THAT GRANNY GOODNESS CALLS AN ORPHANAGE?

TELL ME, OR, BY GAEA, I'LL...

HEEE-HEEE-HEEE!
LOOK, GIRLS -- OUR VAUNTED COMMANDER IS ON HER KNEES!

BE OF GOOD CHEER, TITANIA! THE FEMALE FURIES WILL ONCE AGAIN SAVE YOUR LARGE BUTT! BERNADETH, STOMPA, LASHINA AND YOURS TRULY, MAD HARRIET, WAITING FOR... ORDERS!

WAAAM



TAKE THIS CARRION TO GRANNY AND BE QUICK ABOUT IT!

ALTHOUGH, TRUTH TO SAY, MY HEART WAS NOT IN THE BATTLE!

ELSEWHERE...

THERE'S THE TOMB. PRETTY MUCH FIGURED THEY WOULDN'T JUST SHOVE HIM INTO THE FIRE PITS... NO MATTER WHAT FELL OUT BETWEEN HIM AND HIS FATHER.

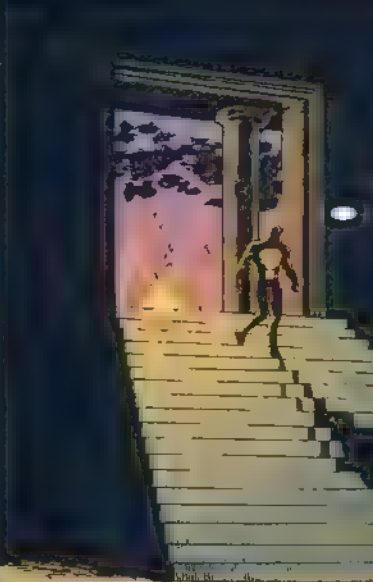
Hmm. JUST TWO PARADEMONS, NONE TOO ALERT AT THAT. MAKES SENSE. WHO IN THEIR RIGHT MINDS WOULD ATTACK *THIS* PLACE? PARADEMONS ARE TOUGH BUT STUPID. LET ME JUST CIRCLE AROUND BEHIND ONE...



MIND IF I BORROW YOUR GUN? I'LL GIVE IT RIGHT BACK.

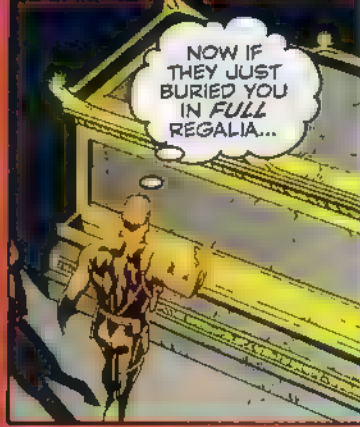
SURPRISE INSPECTION. WHOOPS. YOU GOT A SHIV IN YER THROAT

SCHRAAAK

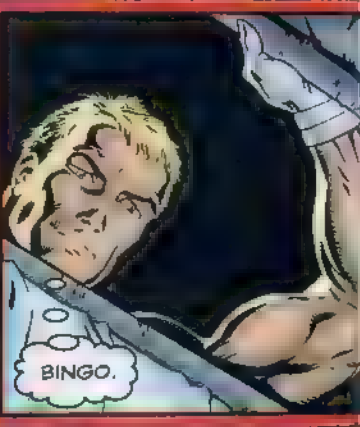


HATE TO BE DOING THIS TO YOU, OLD FRIEND. IF ANYONE DESERVES TRUE, FINAL PEACE, IT'S YOU. YOU WERE THE GREATEST WARRIOR I EVER MET. THE MOMENT WE LOCKED EYES, WE KNEW -- TWO OF A KIND. AND YOU WENT OUT GLORIOUSLY. I ENVY YOU YOUR DEATH.

I KNOW YOU WON'T MIND MY BORROWING SOMETHING FROM YOU. YOU PRIZED FRIENDSHIP, HAVING SO FEW. AND YOU BELIEVED IN FIGHTING THE FIGHT!



NOW IF THEY JUST BURIED YOU IN FULL REGALIA...




BINGO.



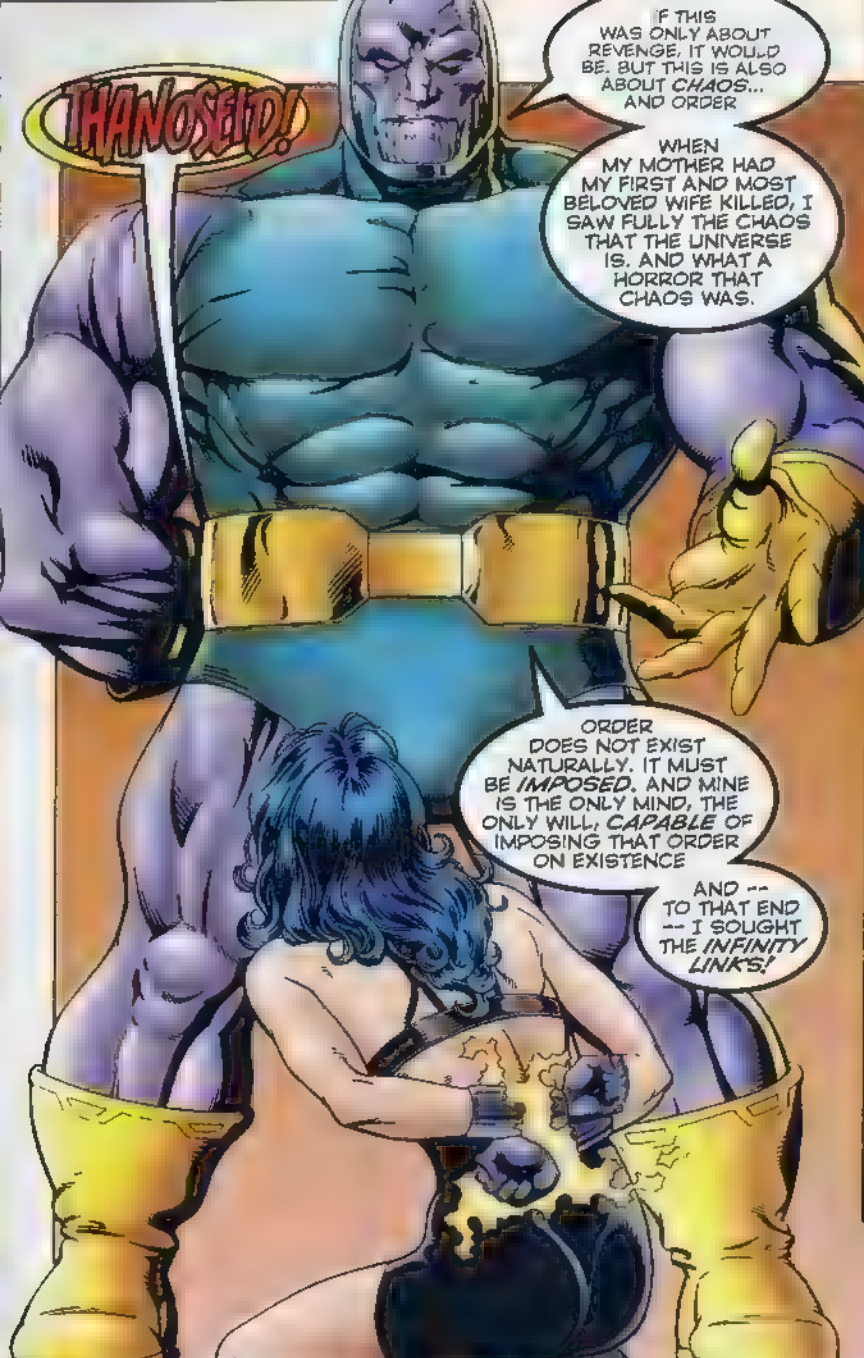
THE HUMAN'S AWAKE, KANTO.

'TIS A PITY, GRANNY, FOR SHE /S FAIR...

ENOUGH. WOMAN, DO YOU KNOW WHY YOU STILL LIVE?



TO AWAIT YOUR REVENGE, I SUPPOSE, ALTHOUGH I HAD ALWAYS THOUGHT REVENGE A LITTLE PETTY FOR YOU...



THANOS SAID!

IF THIS WAS ONLY ABOUT REVENGE, IT WOULD BE. BUT THIS IS ALSO ABOUT CHAOS... AND ORDER

WHEN MY MOTHER HAD MY FIRST AND MOST BELOVED WIFE KILLED, I SAW FULLY THE CHAOS THAT THE UNIVERSE IS. AND WHAT A HORROR THAT CHAOS WAS.

ORDER DOES NOT EXIST NATURALLY. IT MUST BE *IMPOSED*. AND MINE IS THE ONLY MIND, THE ONLY WILL, *CAPABLE* OF IMPOSING THAT ORDER ON EXISTENCE

AND -- TO THAT END -- I SOUGHT THE *INFINITY LINKS!*



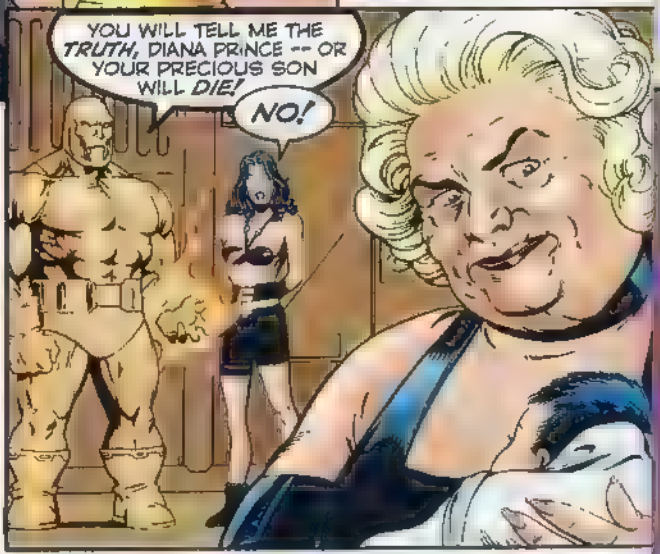
JUST AS APOKOLIPS REPRESENTS THE APOTHEOSIS OF ORDER, SO DO THE GAUDILY CLAD SO-CALLED HEROES OF EARTH REPRESENT THE ESSENCE OF CHAOS -- AND THEY *DENIED* ME THE LINKS!



BUT THE LINKS WERE TOO VALUABLE A *WEAPON* TO DESTROY! YOU *MUST* KNOW WHERE THEY ARE!

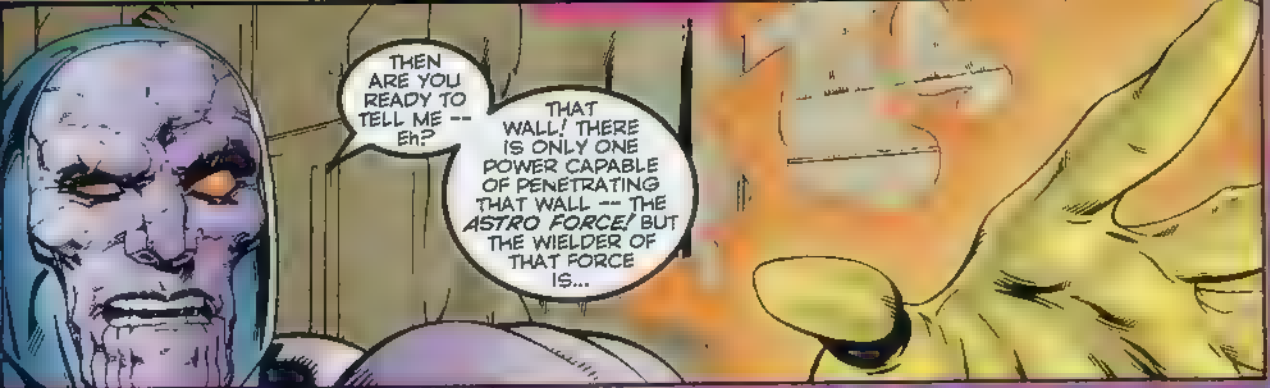
THEY WERE TOO *DANGEROUS* A *WEAPON*! THEY WERE DESTROYED..!

LIES!



YOU WILL TELL ME THE *TRUTH*, DIANA PRINCE -- OR YOUR PRECIOUS SON WILL *DIE!*

NO!

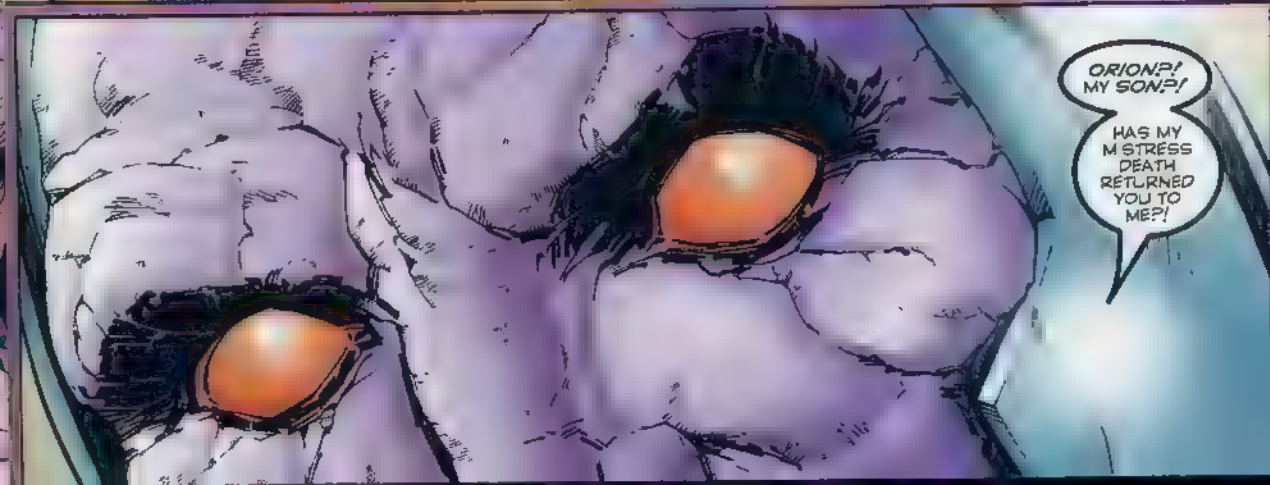


THEN ARE YOU READY TO TELL ME -- EH?

THAT WALL! THERE IS ONLY ONE POWER CAPABLE OF PENETRATING THAT WALL -- THE ASTRO FORCE! BUT THE WIELDER OF THAT FORCE IS...



THANOSEID!
TURN AND FACE ME!



ORION?! MY SON?!

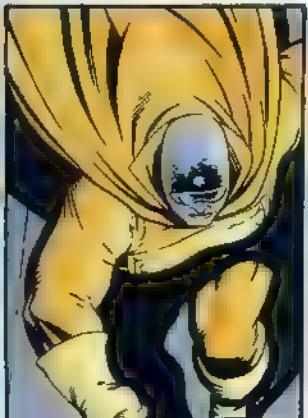
HAS MY MISTRESS DEATH RETURNED YOU TO ME?!



HEADS UP, PRINCESS! CAUGHT OL' CRAGGY PUSS FLAT-FOOTED, BUT WE KNOW IT CAN'T LAST. AND THE ASTRO-GLIDER'S JUST ABOUT OUT OF JUICE!

SCHRAAK

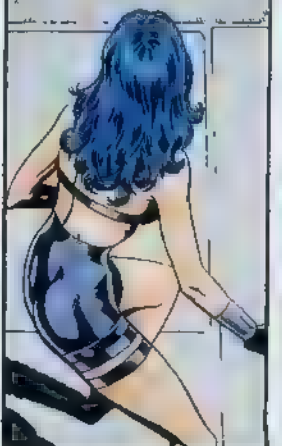
Aaah! TREVOR CASTLE, I COULD MARRY YOU ALL OVER AGAIN!



LATER, BABE. I GOT SOMEONE ELSE ON MY DANCE CARD RIGHT NOW.



AND YOU AND I, LADY, HAVE OUR OWN GAVOTTE!



YOU'RE SITTING THIS ONE OUT, BERNADETH! YOU SEE, I FINALLY REMEMBERED WHO MY REAL FRIENDS ARE -- AND YOU'RE NOT ONE OF THEM!



YOU ARE A COMELY WENCH, M'LADY, BUT KANTO IS THANOS' FOREMOST ASSASSIN. AND IN HIS NAME, I MUST... I MUST DISPATCH...

...YET, WHY DO TH MY HEART STAY MY HAND?

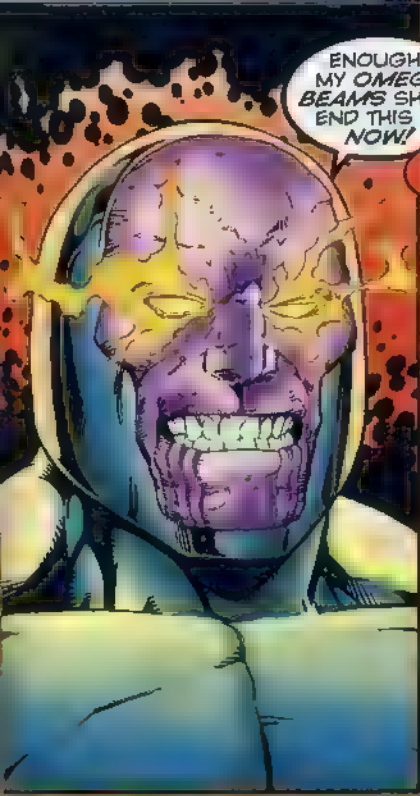


I MAKE YOU A GIFT, M'LADY -- OF YOUR OWN LIFE. OTHERS MAY NOT BE SO GALLANT.

TURN AROUND, DIANA DEAR OLD GRANNY HARKNESS ISN'T SO KIND.

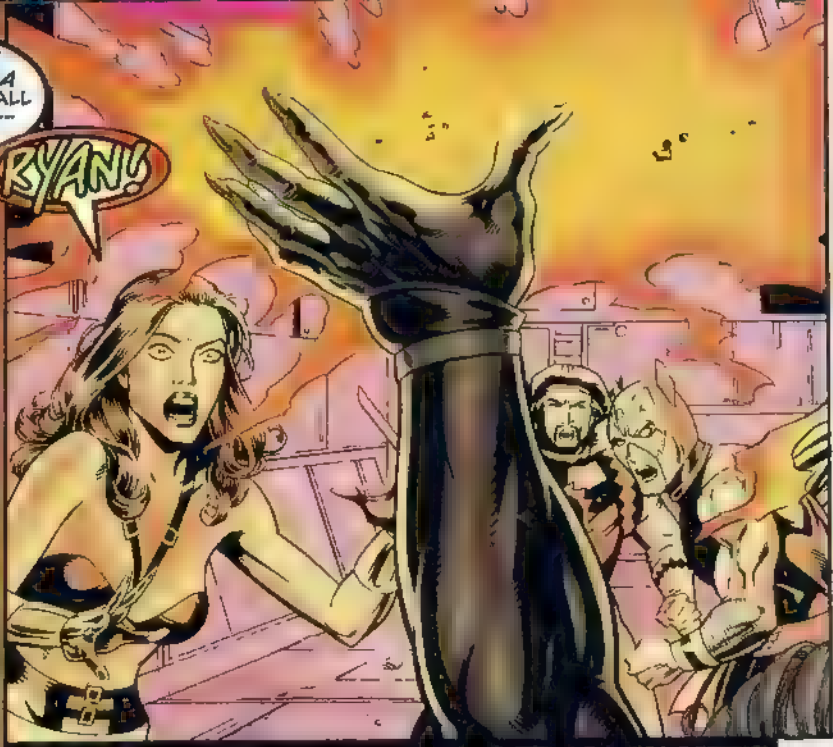
SURRENDER.

I HAVE AN ULTIMATUM FOR YOU, OLD HARPY -- GIVE UP THE CHILD OR EMBRACE DEATH!

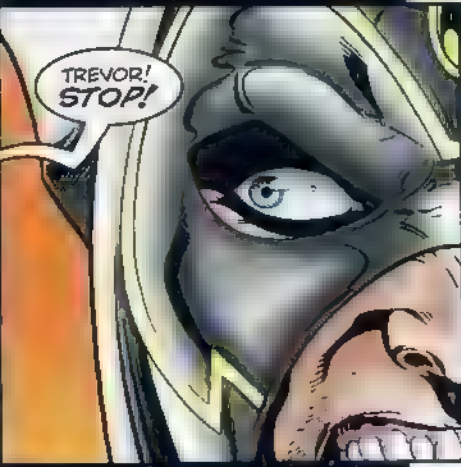


ENOUGH!
MY OMEGA
BEAMS SHALL
END THIS --
NOW!

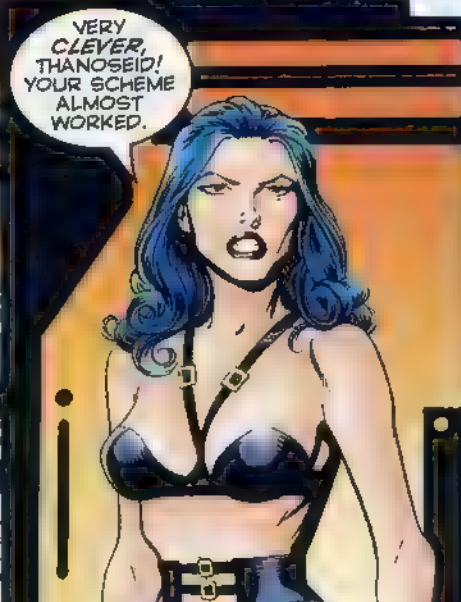
RYAN!



SO SMUG! ALL YOU
UNDERSTAND IS AN EYE
FOR AN EYE, A TOOTH FOR A
TOOTH! WELL, I STILL HAVE
ENOUGH ASTRO FORCE
LEFT TO MAKE THIS A
LIFE FOR A
LIFE!



TREVOR!
STOP!



VERY
CLEVER,
THANOS! YOUR
SCHEME
ALMOST
WORKED.

THANOSEID'S OMEGA BEAMS DON'T JUST DESTROY -- THEY CAN BEND TIME AND SPACE!

AND THAT'S WHAT THEY DID WITH OUR SON, TREVOR --

-- SENDING HIM BACK IN TIME SO HE COULD BE RAISED ON APOKOLIPS AS THANOSEID'S PERSONAL ASSASSIN, KNOWING ONLY ONE NAME -- *KANTO!*

YOU AND HE ARE SO MUCH ALIKE, AND THAT WOULD'VE BEEN THANOSEID'S ULTIMATE REVENGE! EVEN AS HIS OWN SON ORION WAS KILLED, SO YOU WOULD'VE KILLED OR BEEN KILLED BY *OUR BOY!*

BUT I AM HIS *MOTHER* -- I LOOKED IN HIS EYES AND KNEW HIM. DEEP WITHIN, HE KNEW ME, TOO. DENY ALL THIS IF YOU CAN, THANOSEID.

I DENY NOTHING. I CONFIRM NOTHING. I AM THANOSEID.

AND THESE GAMES ARE OVER.

BUT REVENGE IS COLD RECOMPENSE FOR THE VOID IN MY HEART. NOTHING WILL EVER RELIEVE THE PAIN THAT THE DEATH OF EVEN SUCH AN ERRANT SON AS ORION.

EVEN THE GODS ARE NOT ALOOF TO PAIN.

TZAPP

A CROSS THE BIFROST BRIDGE, ONE OF THE ARCING BEAMS TOUCHES DOWN...

...AND TWIN FORMS EMERGE.

TITANIA? DO WE STILL LIVE? I HAD THOUGHT WE WERE DEAD, MOST CERTAINLY!

FOR ALL HIS VILLAINY, THANOSOID IS STILL A BEING OF HONOR, AND IN THAT LIES THE HOPE OF HIS REDEMPTION. HAVING NO FURTHER USE FOR YOU TWO, HE SENT YOU WHERE YOU BELONGED.



THE UNIFRIEND WROTE IN FLAMING WORDS OF YOUR ARRIVAL. WELCOME TO NEW ASSGARD. I AM ALL HIGHFATHER ODIN.

I THANK YOU, MY LORD, AND I GLADLY PLEDGE MY SWORD TO YOU, BUT -- CAN YOU TELL ME -- WHAT BECAME OF MY PARENTS? WHAT DID THANOSOID DO TO THEM?

"BE OF PEACE,
MY SON. THEY,
TOO, ARE GONE
TO WHERE *THEY*
BELONG."

ZAMMO

SO --
HERE OUR
STRANGE QUEST
ENDS, TREVOR --
IN THE SAME
ALLEY WHERE
WE FIRST
MET!

YEAH.
HARD TO
FIGURE,
PRINCESS --
DID WE WIN
OR DID WE
LOSE?



Y' KNOW,
IF IT HADN'T
BEEN FOR YOU,
I MIGHT'VE KILLED
RYAN. GAME, SET,
AND MATCH TO
THANOSOID.



BUT
YOU DIDN'T.
YOU'RE A BETTER
MAN THAN YOU
GIVE YOURSELF
CREDIT FOR,
TREVOR
CASTLE.

LOVE WON
OUT, TREVOR!
WE'VE WON EACH
OTHER BACK!

AND
THAT IS
OUR FINAL --
OUR *HUMAN*
-- VICTORY! AND
NOTHING WILL
EVER PART US
AGAIN!



THE END?

"RIGHT NOW -- WE GOT ACTION!"

HOWLING LIKE A MADMAN, TREVOR CASTLE LAUNCHES HIMSELF TOWARD HIS FOES. THIS QUEST HAS BEEN A LONG AND TORTURED PATH, LEADING TO THE STRONGHOLD OF THE HAND...*

WHILE DIANA, FORMER AMAZON PRINCESS, RETRIEVES HER COLLAPSIBLE RECURSIVE BOW FROM ITS HIDDEN RESTING PLACE ON HER QUIVER, WITH A DEFT SNAP, THE BOW IS ONCE AGAIN READY FOR SERVICE!

HER PATH TO THIS POINT HAS BEEN EQUALLY LONG AND ARDUOUS, FILLED WITH FRUSTRATION AND HOPE*...

*As depicted in the equally stunning DIANA PRINCE, FREELANCE #90-99 --redundant Chris

*As seen in the now legendary PUNISHER #90-99. -- Chris the All-knowing

...AND NOW HIS PENT-UP ANGER AND FRUSTRATION FIND MULTIPLE TARGETS...

...LEAVING HER NO LESS DETERMINED...

...NOR HER AIM LESS TRUE.



...AND EXPLODES!